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The transition from relief to development

Report of the Secretary-General+

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 59/141 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/50, in which the Assembly and the Council requested the Secretary-General to report on the issue of transition from relief to development, with the aim of improving the international community's efforts to better respond to transition situations in support of the efforts by affected States. To this end, the report draws on case studies from countries undergoing both post-disaster recovery and transition from conflict to peace to discuss the specific challenges of national ownership, coordination and financing.

* A/60/50 and Corr.1.
** E/2005/100.
\+ The report was delayed for technical reasons.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted in response to the requests contained in General Assembly resolution 59/141 of 15 December 2004 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/50 on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

II. Context

2. In the aftermath of disasters and emergencies, there is often a period between the emergency and development phases when humanitarian needs must be met and the long-term benefits of rehabilitation and reconstruction have yet to be fully realized. While in the past such transitions were largely regarded as a sequential progression from relief to development, it is now recognized that there are various aspects of transition processes that must be addressed simultaneously.

3. All transition situations are unique and therefore require flexible responses adapted to the specific context and circumstances of the country. However, all types of transition processes have one common feature: national ownership of the transition process, whether it be in response to natural disaster, economic transformation or conflict, is the key to successful and sustainable recovery and development efforts and to lasting peace.

4. In post-disaster transitions, recovery tends to be broad in scope, as disasters can affect several countries simultaneously. Post-disaster transitions also occur soon after the crisis phase, often beginning within weeks of the initial disaster and leaving little time for post-crisis planning. Post-disaster transitions also typically take place in the context of a functioning State. Therefore, they usually feature a relatively straightforward relationship between national and international actors and institutions. Nonetheless, disasters often wipe out critical infrastructure, government capacity and hard-won development gains, requiring that post-disaster transition phases also include sustained support for the immediate restoration of livelihoods and basic social services, as well as for preparedness measures and activities that reduce future disaster vulnerability. It is critical that disaster-recovery programming be developed together with affected Governments and communities and with an awareness of the existing socio-economic situation.

5. Recovery from drought poses a set of unique challenges. Although like most disasters the impact of drought depends on the interplay between a natural event and socio-economic policies, drought differs from most disasters in that it is slow in onset and may continue in cycles or for a prolonged period of time. If the effects of drought are left unchecked, the fight over scarce resources that could ensue could aggravate existing tensions and political instability and lead to violence. The United Nations approach to drought has therefore sought to simultaneously address humanitarian concerns, while working with Governments to identify and address the underlying social and environmental factors that may increase the impact of drought and increase food insecurity.

6. Post-conflict transition situations are complex and are characterized by the close interplay of political, security, human rights, humanitarian and development imperatives. Conflict-related emergencies rarely end neatly. Insecurity may persist to varying degrees, government structures may be incapacitated or destroyed, and the root causes of the conflict may not be adequately addressed by negotiated political solutions that have yet to take root, often causing conflicts to resurface. Post-conflict transition operations, in particular, involve a complex web of political, peacekeeping, human rights, humanitarian and development activities geared towards consolidating peace, supporting restoration of State and government institutions and reinforcing human security. Such activities may need to occur simultaneously, at varying levels of intensity, and would be constantly susceptible to both setbacks and opportunities. As with post-disaster transitions, however, it is critical that the desired goal of all these efforts, or the vision of the post-recovery end state, be developed by and with affected Governments, civil society and communities.

7. The key challenges in post-disaster, drought and post-conflict transitions will be further elaborated in the present report. Case studies that highlight lessons learned and best practices are provided for each challenge. In the case of the sections on post-disaster and post-conflict situations, a discussion is included of additional measures that should be taken or have been taken by the United Nations system and others to strengthen response. The report concludes with a series of implications for future action.

III. Post-disaster recovery

A. National and local ownership and participation

8. National ownership of and participation in the design and implementation of recovery programmes are essential not only to achieve the desired impact of recovery efforts and their sustainability, but also to strengthen capacities on the ground. The participation of local disaster-management experts and technicians will help to ensure that recovery programming considers the needs and capacities of the affected population. The involvement of national decision makers is critical to building a consensus around recovery priorities, roles, responsibilities and resources. To ensure that such ownership by national actors takes hold, external support must empower local actors and strengthen institutions through the transfer of technology and know-how and through public education. Such an approach should include assistance in mapping hazards and risks and the formulation and/or revision of risk-reduction measures. International investment is also needed at the local community, national and regional levels in preparedness, response capabilities and disaster mitigation, including advocacy and awareness campaigns, and the development of early warning capacities and training exercises.

9. In situations where local government capacity has been weakened by a disaster, targeted support to help the authorities coordinate the disaster response becomes vital. In Grenada, which suffered loss of life and material damage following the 2004 hurricane season, the United Nations has supported the Government in formulating a national reconstruction plan, which includes guidelines for the construction of hurricane-resistant housing, strengthening

government capacity in public information and communications and disaster risk reduction. The Government, with the support of the United Nations, also established the Agency for Reconstruction and Development in December 2004 to assist in the social, economic and physical recovery of Grenada through the application of specialist expertise; effective collaboration with Government ministries, development partners and other stakeholders; and the transparent stewardship of local and international resources. It is essential that the very close relationship that has been established with the Agency be continued. Although faced with start-up challenges of its own, a strong technical entity such as the Agency can push ahead with a focused reconstruction programme and priorities, one of which must include the implementation of the coordination and reporting mechanism that has been developed and discussed.

10. Equally important to an effective and smooth transition is support to local and community structures. Local involvement in the recovery effort following the earthquake in December 2003 in the city of Bam, Islamic Republic of Iran, has been critical both for the smooth progress of the transition and as a mechanism for building and strengthening local capacity. Immediately following the earthquake, emergency response efforts were led by the Government and the Iranian Red Crescent, which has significant technical capacity in all aspects of disaster risk reduction and management. However, at the time, the strong institutional arrangements at the national level were not matched at the local and intermediate levels. In the recovery phase, the United Nations and its partners have promoted participatory approaches and decentralized planning and programming, involving direct consultation with the affected communities, and have supported the Government in adopting and implementing community-centred approaches. This has included the provision of support to local authorities in promoting, supervising and guiding planning and construction processes, in line with local codes and practices.

11. Similarly, early recovery efforts in the Indian Ocean region following the tsunami of December 2004 were driven by the need to respond urgently, and were focused on providing technical and financial support to government actors and institutions. With support from United Nations agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and civil society, decentralized capacities that promote participatory approaches to recovery are now being strengthened. National Governments are taking ownership and becoming involved in all recovery processes. In this way, it is hoped that sensitive issues, such as land rights or the special vulnerabilities of minorities and migrant populations, can be addressed.

12. Effective communication with local populations about recovery activities is another means of reducing confusion and distress in a post-disaster community and better involving them in the recovery process. Following the relief effort in Bam, the momentum created by promises to reconstruct the city quickly was transformed into a variety of proposals and schemes that raised local expectations and resulted in a growing sense of confusion and unrest. It was clear that a strategy was needed to address and respond to community expectations, to inform the affected population of their rights and to highlight both the potential benefits and limitations of the reconstruction process. The United Nations launched a community-based information management programme that now issues a biweekly newsletter and mobilizes volunteers for dissemination of information on reconstruction strategies and plans and on people's entitlements and needs. A similar newsletter is currently being produced in Sri Lanka. Community-based information management

programmes have also been crucial in addressing regional disparities to ensure that all regions benefit from the reconstruction efforts and are better off than they were before. Community mobilization and self-help form a cornerstone and a key organizing principle for demand-driven local recovery programmes, and strengthen the capacity of the community to play its role effectively.

B. Coordination

13. The primary responsibility for coordination in a post-disaster setting rests with the national authorities. Experience demonstrates, however, that national capacities are frequently overwhelmed by the volume and speed of response by a multiplicity of actors. External actors can facilitate the Government's coordination role by recognizing that their level of commitment to coordination and coherence has a direct impact on a Government's effectiveness, particularly in countries with less developed systems that require additional capacity strengthening.

14. The coordination challenges in any disaster recovery effort are often complex. Coordination of operations is labour intensive, in both traditional sectors, such as shelter and camp management, and in information management, resource mobilization and financial tracking. Coordination among local, national, regional and international response teams is essential, as the inevitable convergence of multiple-response actors can complicate, rather than strengthen, the overall recovery effort if field coordination structures are weak and roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined from the outset. Finally, because post-disaster transitions take place at an accelerated and sometimes uneven pace (both within and across countries), coordination and planning mechanisms must be in place and operational within a relatively short time and must be tailored to the country-specific context.

15. While the United Nations system has well-developed capacities for the coordination of response to disasters and humanitarian assistance, mechanisms for the coordination of post-disaster recovery activities need to be further strengthened. Progress has been made in ensuring greater capacity for recovery activities. Within 24 hours of the Indian Ocean tsunami, recovery advisers were deployed to support the Resident Coordinators. In addition, the Special Coordinator for Humanitarian Response was accompanied by a representative from the United Nations Development Group to strengthen the link between relief and development. Recovery teams were also at full capacity in affected countries within two weeks. Nevertheless, coordination gaps remain, and the tsunami response has highlighted the need to conduct assessments of early recovery needs, to set up predictable mechanisms for the deployment of technical experts to support recovery planning and to better coordinate post-crisis funding. Moreover, while the system of leadership accountability for emergency response is well defined at both the headquarters and field levels, similar systems for disaster recovery still require strengthening.

16. It is widely accepted that disaster recovery programmes that emphasize physical reconstruction and the restoration of basic services are insufficient to address the complete range of recovery needs. Rather, post-disaster recovery must contribute to improving the living conditions of the affected population through the revival of production, trade and services and the creation of income-generating and employment opportunities. Lessons emerging from the recovery effort in Bam

suggest that shortcomings in the planning and coordination of recovery efforts led to key revitalization efforts being overlooked. More than one year after the tragedy, the reconstruction process is slow. Most of the city's inhabitants are still living in tents and provisional shelters and many lack access to basic medical care.

17. Coordination challenges are also apparent in those countries affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami. Although expert recovery teams were dispatched by the United Nations within two weeks of the crisis to compile information on disaster damage and recovery needs and to begin supporting national authorities in recovery planning, the pace of recovery since then has been relatively slow. This is due in part to an overall gap in recovery planning that has left key national entities and some United Nations country teams overstretched. In addition, there have been delays in the provision of recovery assistance in critical sectors, such as the construction of permanent housing and water and sanitation facilities, or the recovery or replacement of boats and reconstruction of commercial premises to jump start local economies. In some countries that have drawn up national reconstruction plans, there could have been better coordination of national and international recovery priorities among government actors, United Nations agencies and international financial institutions. While United Nations leadership accountability and reporting lines are clear in the disaster emergency phase, such structures are not as strong for the recovery period.

18. Senior coordination advisers for recovery have been deployed to the three most affected countries, namely, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Maldives, to support the role played by Resident Coordinators. In each case, the Resident Coordinator recognized the need for senior-level support to the United Nations country team in the development and coordination of a United Nations strategic plan that would respond to the priorities included within a national recovery plan while also providing support to established funding mechanisms in the countries. The senior coordination advisers for recovery have played that role.

C. Funding

19. Adequate and sustained support must be given to the post-disaster recovery and reconstruction effort as early as possible. The lack of an adequate and predictable funding base for disaster recovery widens sectoral and coordination gaps and impedes recovery planning. However, past experience suggests that while humanitarian assistance funding is readily available — and often abundant — during the phase of immediate response to a disaster, such support drops off once the initial response is complete and media and public interest has subsided. Such was the case after Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and the earthquake in Bam in December 2003, where only a small percentage of funds promised were ever paid out. Such patterns suggest that, if current practices continue, affected countries and the United Nations alike may have only a limited window of opportunity to raise disaster relief and recovery funds. Mechanisms for funding disaster relief may therefore need to include recovery efforts and to provide sufficient flexibility/fungibility to allow national authorities and external actors to determine the best use of available resources when making allocation decisions to humanitarian and recovery priorities.

20. Owing to the flexibility with which the flash appeal mechanism was used following the Indian Ocean tsunami, it was possible to raise resources for early

recovery in key sectors such as shelter, livelihood, microinfrastructure, fishing industries and the environment, which allowed recovery plans and programmes to be implemented without delay. This enabled timely relief and emergency interventions to help local populations get back on their feet. In Indonesia, rubble removal operations undertaken as "cash for work" reduced the psychological stress of the population while injecting cash into the local economy. The United Nations system, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank jointly conducted a full assessment of post-disaster recovery needs, and are providing support to the Governments of India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Maldives in exploring how to address those needs.

21. However, experience has shown that the flash appeal mechanism alone has not been the ideal vehicle for mobilizing resources for recovery purposes. India, which had response capacities in place and therefore did not participate in the flash appeal, has reported great difficulty in raising resources for recovery purposes. Alternative mechanisms are needed to fill this gap.

D. Investing in preparedness and risk reduction

22. Failure to invest in disaster risk reduction and preparedness and in post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation as integral components of sustainable development efforts puts already vulnerable countries at even greater risk. The integration and prioritization of disaster risk management into national development plans and budgets, as well as Government and international commitment to concrete preparedness activities, can effectively mitigate the impact of even large-scale hazards. Attention to risk reduction and prevention strategies can also curb vulnerability to disasters in the long term. Moreover, a focus on risk reduction in the recovery phase allows countries and communities to go beyond replacing damaged infrastructure and to address development deficits and bring living conditions to a level above pre-disaster standards.

23. For example, the worst human and economic losses sustained by Caribbean island States during the unusually intense hurricane season late in 2004 affected the most vulnerable segments of the population in Haiti and Grenada. Neither of these countries was prepared for the scale and intensity of the event. In the case of Haiti, the impact of the hurricane-related floods was further exacerbated by extreme environmental degradation brought on by ecologically harmful land use. In contrast, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Cuba recorded much lower levels of loss and damage.

24. Such disparity in the level of impact is directly related to government commitment to concrete preparedness and risk-reduction activities. More than 15 years ago, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management in Jamaica began a programme to transfer skills to communities in the areas of search and rescue, first aid, contingency planning, shelter management and early warning. Community teams were formed and supported by the Government, the Jamaica Red Cross and local civil society. During the 2004 hurricane season, communities with those skills systematically responded better to events and were better able to assist themselves and response agencies with evacuation and shelter management and the distribution of relief and recovery supplies. After Hurricane Ivan, the Prime Minister of Jamaica called for the Caribbean region to establish a fund that countries

could access for hurricane recovery and reconstruction and called for Caribbean countries to develop a common policy on natural hazard risk reduction and to integrate that policy into their national planning and development efforts. Jamaica is currently drafting a national hazard mitigation policy (2005).

25. To promote regional preparedness throughout the Caribbean, the United Nations set up a regional inter-agency standing committee and a relief, disaster and emergency task force in Panama in 2005. In addition to coordinating regional response and preparedness, the task force provides a platform for the exchange of information and consensus-building in determining the priority actions in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Comprehensive plans to put preparedness measures into place, including strengthening government capacity and working with local communities to change land use patterns that exacerbate the effects of hurricanes, need to be explored and implemented urgently on a regional basis. Along these lines, a lessons-learned workshop for eastern Caribbean countries was held in June 2005 in Jamaica, in the framework of the United Nations Disaster Management and Training Programme, to learn from the 2004 hurricane season. In addition, for the past several years, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has been hosting, with national Societies, an annual pre-hurricane-season planning and preparedness workshop with hurricane-prone countries, the United Nations, donor agencies and non-governmental organizations. The most recent such meeting, held in June in Panama, led to the development of a memorandum of understanding among the Government of Panama, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on the pre-positioning of relief stocks at the Red Cross/Red Crescent base in Panama.

26. In the Indian Ocean region, both international and national organizations working in the tsunami recovery effort have aimed at balancing the need for rapid recovery while addressing the structural causes of risk and vulnerability. Such efforts have included public consultations in Indonesia, where experiences with prior disasters were analysed and integrated into new shelter strategies and environmental preservation. While it is generally accepted that it would have been almost impossible to be adequately prepared for an event of this magnitude and impact, the tsunami disaster prompted a new resolve to create a region-wide early warning system for tsunamis and other predictable hazards. Similarly, long-term preparedness strategies supported by the United Nations and the Government of India (following previous natural catastrophes in Gujarat and Orissa) proved critical in the early hours of the tsunami and demonstrated how preparedness at both the national and local levels could save lives. Since the tsunami, India and the international community have resolved to intensify and extend disaster risk-management programmes along the following lines: incorporation of disaster risk-management in all recovery and reconstruction efforts; conduct of comprehensive multi-hazard risk assessments; establishment of clear risk-reduction guidelines sector by sector; and the strengthening of emergency response capacities at all levels.

27. However, despite compelling evidence that risk-reduction efforts are linked to improved opportunities for sustainable development, obtaining funds for capacity-building and investment in reducing vulnerability and risk continues to be a challenge. That area continues to receive much lower levels of resources from the donor community compared to the funding available for humanitarian response and

conflict situations. Disaster-reduction efforts need to be increasingly promoted as a solid investment towards saving lives and reducing loss and as fundamental to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development in general.

IV. Drought

28. The humanitarian crisis that continues to ravage southern Africa has challenged traditional response and assistance approaches. While the crisis first appeared on the humanitarian map as one precipitated by drought, closer analysis showed that the causal factors and drivers of the crisis were more complex and deeply rooted, and involved a number of factors in addition to climate change and inadequate rainfall. This realization demonstrated the need to rethink responses and to develop innovative and creative approaches to address the needs of the most vulnerable across the region. In short, it was recognized that while there was clearly a humanitarian crisis in southern Africa, traditional responses were not the answer.

29. Since the beginning of 2004, the work of the United Nations has been guided by the so-called "triple threat" approach: simultaneously tackling food insecurity, HIV/AIDS and weakened capacity for governance. This approach promoted a blurring of the lines between emergency relief and development assistance and contributed to providing a practical environment in which United Nations agencies work together collaboratively, using common, and even joint, programming initiatives to address the identified priorities.

30. The triple threat approach, developed under the leadership of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Needs in Southern Africa and included in a paper prepared by the High-level Committee on Programmes, acknowledged that southern Africa required simultaneous humanitarian and development action to address the three priorities. Accordingly, the United Nations and its partners requested donors to support immediate actions to address immediate needs and immediate action to address long term needs. In a region where life expectancy and other human capacity and economic indicators have been in reverse for several years, largely due to the impact of HIV/AIDS, the United Nations has recognized that the conventional concept of "recovery" has little meaning. The region will continue to experience shocks from natural hazards, such as floods, droughts and cyclones. However, poverty and the levels of vulnerability across the region have meant that assistance is geared towards arresting increases in vulnerability.

31. A key lesson to understanding the approach in southern Africa can be drawn from the response and follow-up to the drought-induced food security crisis in 1992/93. Following the largely successful response, the humanitarian community vowed that this would never be allowed to happen again, believing that effective development assistance would ensure regional food security. However, a decade later, a regional crisis of immense proportions has happened again, this time with a much more complex set of issues and causes, many of which had been ignored in the conventional development response in the preceding years.

32. Relief, recovery, and development support are needed in this region simultaneously, allowing households and communities who find themselves on different rungs of the development ladder to meet their immediate needs while

engaging in appropriate activities with a longer-term vision. Safety nets and social protection programmes are increasingly needed within long-term strategies, while appropriate rehabilitation and economic development activities should be considered during relief periods. The relief-development continuum has dissolved in the face of recurrent shocks, rampant poverty and the omnipresent impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

33. The inter-agency regional humanitarian strategic framework for southern Africa, which is developed through the United Nations Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Support Office for the Special Envoy and supported by the new United Nations Regional Director's team, includes new "recovery" perspectives shared jointly by the United Nations and the non-governmental organizations community. The framework provides a basis for short- and long-term responses in which humanitarian and development players take joint action, meeting immediate needs while working to prevent and mitigate vulnerability to future shocks and risks, build livelihood resilience and enhance economic and social growth.

Funding

34. The multifaceted nature of the crisis in southern Africa poses particular resourcing challenges. The depiction of the crisis as one that was simply driven by drought brought forward the use of the traditional emergency funding tool, the consolidated appeal. While regional and country-specific requirements were multisectoral, over 80 per cent of requirements were for food assistance activities. As analysis of the triple threat approach developed, the need for broader responses has become increasingly apparent, as has the need for more creative solutions to enable the most vulnerable to access food and necessary social services. The request for donors to support immediate actions to address immediate needs and immediate action to address long-term needs challenged the continued use of the consolidated appeal as the most appropriate (or accepted) mechanism for mobilizing resources, particularly in areas that support the critical social safety net provisions needed in many countries in the region.

35. While there is a palpable shift in the region by donors to assist responsible Governments to strengthen capacity for provision of social services through direct budgetary support, immediate outreach to support the millions of chronically vulnerable people in the region will remain insufficient for several years to come. Further shocks caused by inclement weather, such as the dry spell that has decimated harvests in Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique this year, continue to require donors to keep unlocked resources for short-term emergency responses. Only through a flexible and informed approach by donors that addresses the complexity of needs in the region will it be possible to arrest the decline in life expectancy and other human capacity and economic indicators.

V. Post-conflict transitions

A. National ownership and capacity-building

36. National ownership of the transition process in post-conflict transition countries must be both a general principle and a priority objective guiding international assistance efforts. Without such a focus, the main goal in post-conflict

transition — consolidating a sustainable and just peace — is unlikely to be achieved. Without national ownership providing a vision of the sort of country for which the transition process is laying the groundwork, sustainable peace is unlikely. When transition processes are not rooted in their host societies, for example, they risk being derailed by lingering conflict and unmet expectations. Inadequate ownership also opens the door to parallel structures being developed outside the formal institutions called for by peace agreements, which may work at cross purposes with formal arrangements and contribute to tensions and instability.

37. As crucial as national ownership of transition processes may be, however, such ownership cannot and should not be assumed to exist or to spring into existence fully formed at the start of transition. Unlike post-disaster situations, the capacity of national actors to effectively and fully engage a transition process cannot be assumed after years of conflict. The trauma of conflict and the circumstances leading to it are likely to have eroded the capacities of national actors to guide and manage complex post-conflict transitions. De facto country-wide sovereignty can also not necessarily be assumed. Effective State control may not extend to all areas, or may be limited in those areas it does reach, and the legitimacy of transitional governmental bodies needs time to take root in post-conflict societies.

38. National ownership must be cultivated by all participants in the post-conflict transition process. In the short term, this will entail the creation of planning and coordination mechanisms that are led by and/or strongly engage national actors, involving them in both consultations and decision-making. In the mid- to longer term, reinforcing national ownership will also require a concerted effort by international actors to avoid unnecessarily substituting for national actors, as may have been required during the height of the conflict. International actors must also make a concerted effort to develop national capacities. For example, international actors should support Government efforts to reassume the key functions of the State in a manner consistent with human rights norms and obligations, including basic administration, security, law and order, and the provision of social services.

39. As crucial as it is to uphold the principle and pursue the objective of full national ownership, experience demonstrates that the fragile period immediately following the conclusion of peace agreements necessitates a realistic expectation of national capacities to manage the myriad efforts required for the success of transition. Successful post-conflict transition also requires the rapid launch of assistance programmes that will help to quickly stabilize and improve the situation in a country, including ongoing relief efforts, rapid scaling-up of delivery of basic social services, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, return programmes for internally displaced persons and refugees, and livelihoods and small-scale infrastructure programmes to revitalize rural economies and provide jobs. The speed with which such programmes need to be launched if they are to be successful will sometimes limit the degree to which they can build on existing national structures, particularly in conflicts that have drastically eroded national capacities, or in areas where the extension of State authority is still limited. This places a premium on the need for creative solutions involving civil society, decentralized approaches, and non-governmental actors, while building in commensurate capacity-development measures to accompany large-scale expansion of external assistance.

40. Post-conflict transitions typically lead to new areas being accessible, which usually harbour pockets of extremely vulnerable populations. Humanitarian agencies will have to respond extremely quickly to address critical needs, and will continue in such instances to substitute for national authorities, rather than develop national capacities. Early in post-conflict transitions, therefore, it will be critical for humanitarian agencies to maintain their own capacity to flexibly address such needs. Doing so will entail upholding the well-established humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, without which humanitarian agencies are unable to operate effectively.

41. The exact balance of efforts to strengthen national ownership and other efforts critical to successful transition will depend on the particular transition. The specific nature of efforts to reinforce national ownership — be they planning and coordination mechanisms or capacity-development programmes — will also vary from one context to another. This extent of variability is illustrated by the responses to the post-conflict transitions in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Haiti.

42. In Sierra Leone, following the declaration of peace in January 2002, humanitarian and recovery assistance planning was integrated with national development plans and combined with building national capacity. Specifically, a National Commission of Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Reconstruction was created with technical and financial support from international donors. This Government body, later reorganized as the National Commission for Social Action, was the principal Government partner involved in the design and delivery of humanitarian response and the development of the national and district recovery strategies. Grants from the two Commissions supported community-based recovery and strengthened civil society, allowing relief activities to support long-term recovery from the outset.

43. The development of the National Recovery Strategy and the establishment of National and District Recovery Committees also helped to ensure national ownership and contributed to the development of national capacity. Despite its failings,[1] the National Recovery Strategy provided a framework that guided both local and international recovery interventions. The Committees, although hindered by minimal resources and severe capacity constraints, provided a vehicle for the extension of Government authority and functioned as a Government partner for community-based recovery interventions across all sectors at the local level and laid the foundations for district councils and Government decentralization.

44. In Afghanistan, internal governance structures were insufficient to take on full responsibility for post-crisis activities after the collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001. It was therefore a priority to reinvigorate the national capacity of Government ministries and other institutions as quickly as possible so that the decisions taken and their implementation were domestically driven. In part this was achieved by a "light footprint" approach to the design of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, which was intended to prevent large numbers of expatriate staff from overwhelming what was supposed to be an Afghan-owned reconstruction process. In addition, joint strategic planning among international and national actors in Afghanistan was critical to enabling the Government to function. This was achieved through the creation of the Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority and later the consultative groups, which facilitated substantive interaction among the Government, donors, international financial institutions, United Nations agencies

and non-governmental organizations in defining, financing and implementing priority programme areas and served as the primary mechanism for developing the national budget. The United Nations also seconded staff to several of the Afghan line ministries, including the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development, to jump start critical Government programmes.

45. The transition in Haiti demonstrates the requirement to balance practical efforts to increase national ownership with the response to urgent emergency needs. Following the political crisis and the subsequent deployment of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the country was struck by a series of hurricane-related floods late in 2004, requiring the immediate mobilization of the Government's and the United Nations in-country resources and capacities to respond to compound humanitarian needs. This crisis, combined with the fragility of Government institutions and ongoing security concerns, delayed the implementation of the Interim Cooperation Framework, which had been prepared by the Transitional Government in Haiti, in close cooperation with the international community, to identify priority transition areas[2] and link early transition planning with longer-term national strategies.

B. Coordination

46. As the prior examples demonstrate, effective coordination among international and national actors in post-conflict transitions is critical to ensuring ownership of the transition process within the Government and local communities. This requires inclusive processes that include line ministries, central banks, local government and community groups. Coordination structures and processes — from needs assessments to strategic planning to funding mechanisms — must be designed and implemented with, and in support of, national development plans and budgets. It also requires that the delivery of services supports, rather than duplicates, national efforts.

47. The coordination of transition efforts also requires that the various facets — political, peacekeeping, humanitarian, human rights, developmental — of the United Nations strategic and operational response at Headquarters and at the country level, must come together around a unified strategy and purpose. However, the developmental, humanitarian, human rights, peacekeeping and political parts of the United Nations and its partners do not always act in full harmony or with a shared understanding of context and events. Moreover, the United Nations sometimes struggles to strike the right balance between quick-impact projects and longer-term, institution-building processes. Effective and smooth transitions therefore require a single and consistent strategy that supports greater coherence between political and operational efforts based on common analysis and assessment of needs, identification of roles and priorities, clear and strong leadership, and coordination in support of national recovery. Ongoing discussions with regard to the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Support Office, and those pertaining to the recommendations of the integrated missions study, are providing a platform to deliberate on these challenges.

48. United Nations partnerships with other international and national actors, including regional organizations, donors, international financial institutions, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and non-governmental

organizations, are also critical to the transition process and need to be further developed throughout all stages of the transition process. Regional entities such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community, can facilitate the regional stability that supports country-level transition. Non-governmental organizations — both national and international — are often involved in capacity development and the delivery of critical social services to local authorities and civil society before, during and after transition. Their knowledge, experience and networks on the ground can contribute significantly to the dynamics of transition.

49. Again, the responses in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Haiti illustrate how the United Nations has attempted to tackle these coordination challenges. The establishment of an integrated mission in Sierra Leone facilitated coherent planning between the United Nations country team and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Facilitated by the creation of the post of Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the United Nations country team and UNAMSIL developed coherent transition planning in support of the national recovery process. The country team then worked closely with the Mission and the national authorities to prepare the peacebuilding and recovery strategy in order to allow for the phase-out of relief actors and to help United Nations agencies shift their operations from emergency to reconstruction activities. The country team also developed a transition support team to provide coordination support within the team and to support the Government and local authorities to take the lead during transition.

50. At a broader level, the consultative group for Sierra Leone provided an excellent forum for bringing together the Government and its partners (donors, the United Nations, international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations), and the results based framework for 2003-04 (based on the National Recovery Strategy) provided a useful tool for monitoring and assessing progress, which guided overall recovery interventions. In 2004, the development partnership committee was established. It now serves as the principal coordination forum in which the Government and stakeholders can hold a dialogue on strategic, policy and funding issues.

51. In Afghanistan, the United Nations has focused on and worked to set up effective and coherent coordination structures with both national and international partners. The United Nations country team worked together with the World Bank on the formulation of the Government's interim poverty reduction strategy to ensure that the programme cycles of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the interim poverty reduction strategy and the World Bank's country assistance strategy are being aligned and will have the same three-year lifespan. That collaboration is part of a broader trend towards more joint planning and programmes, for example, the effort to collectively support the Government in pulling together a $71.4 million drought appeal and the development of the reforestation project entitled "Green Afghanistan initiative", and underlines the need for clearly agreed planning processes that maximize the local expertise available within the United Nations country team.

52. The integration of United Nations agencies within the peacekeeping mission in Haiti has facilitated flexibility of response to both post-conflict and disaster elements of the transition process in that country. The structure of MINUSTAH was

designed to promote linkages between the peace and security and the development and humanitarian entities. The Mission is headed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who is assisted by two deputies in charge of civilian affairs and humanitarian/development affairs. The Deputy Special Representative for development and humanitarian affairs is also responsible for the functions of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator. Moreover, the incorporation of the priorities of the Interim Cooperation Framework in the Mission's mandate, and the explicit recognition that key programmes, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, are both security and development concerns, have enabled the United Nations in Haiti to respond to chronic humanitarian situations (the drought in the north) and exceptional emergencies (the hurricane-related floods at Gonaïves in September 2004), while providing transitional assistance. The combination of the functions of the Deputy Special Representative/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator in MINUSTAH has also facilitated links with the military and police so that operations in difficult neighbourhoods have been coupled with planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, humanitarian assistance and restoration of basic services where possible.

C. Funding

53. The adequate and timely funding of transitions is essential to meet enduring humanitarian, recovery and peace consolidation priorities while simultaneously focusing on building national and local capacity. Taking into account existing and future domestic revenue streams is a critical component in determining the overall funding portfolio. In the absence of adequate domestic resources during the early stages of transition, flexible funding is needed to cover a wide range of urgent priorities, including recurrent costs associated with the payment of Government salaries so that basic Government services, may be restored. Since transition programmes depend on the coherent implementation of a variety of activities, the pace of progress also depends on funding all component priorities as identified and agreed upon during joint planning and assessment processes. In order to manage funds from multiple sources and integrate them into national planning and budget structures, stronger tracking, alignment, harmonization and simplification of working instruments must continue to be pursued. New pooled funding mechanisms, such as the multi-donor trust funds established for Iraq, Afghanistan and now the Sudan, are providing useful lessons for funding priorities identified through post-conflict needs assessment exercises, but it is also critical to ensure that flexible funding is made available in the critical months preceding the finalization of the needs assessment exercise following the signing of the peace agreement, when critical early transition activities must be put in place to facilitate stabilization efforts.

54. The availability of a mechanism to disburse external funding immediately in Afghanistan was critical to enabling the Government to function. Four days after the Afghan Interim Administration took office, as stipulated by the Bonn Agreement, the Afghan Interim Authority Fund, administered by the United Nations Development Programme was established. The Fund provided an immediate mechanism through which $72 million in donor funding could be channelled to salary payments for 240,000 civil servants, the repair of Government ministries and the purchase of basic office equipment and supplies. The Afghan Interim Authority

Fund was succeeded by the World Bank-administered Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, which aimed at channelling multilateral funding to support the national development plan, and by the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, which provided a dedicated United Nations window to support security sector reform, including the payment of policemen's salaries and building the capacity of the police force.

55. To address continuing relief needs while advancing recovery and laying the foundations for sustainable development in Sierra Leone, the United Nations country team shifted the emphasis of the consolidated appeals process to the development of a transition appeal, which highlighted the need to address relief and recovery needs in parallel. At the same time, planning for transitional and longer-term development began at an early stage in 2002 with the formulation of a United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Sierra Leone (2004-07). The final transition appeal, in 2004, addressed residual relief needs and was designed to complement the first year of planned activities of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

56. In Haiti, however, the lack of a coordinated funding mechanism has hampered planning and response to urgent priorities, and has dissipated resources. The absence of a unique funding mechanism to support transition processes and programmes has made it difficult for the Government to plan ahead, track funds received and disbursed, or monitor the cost of programmes. Neither the Government nor MINUSTAH has had access to available, flexible funding that could be allocated in response to urgent priorities. Even the Government budget process is hampered by funding uncertainty. This has led to the postponement of the disarmament and rapid employment-generation programmes until a minimal amount of funding is confirmed. The receipt of funds is frequently the result of consultations among individual donors or partners and the Government, and decisions are sector- and even project-specific in many cases. This piecemeal approach, despite the existence of an agreed set of priorities contained in the Interim Cooperation Framework, means that considerable energy is devoted to project design and approval procedures, often for relatively small amounts of donor funding.

D. United Nations support to post-conflict recovery

57. A number of analytical and programming tools have been developed in the past year to facilitate the emergence of a national recovery and reconstruction plan that is based upon an internationally and nationally endorsed assessment of needs. The United Nations/World Bank post-conflict needs assessment methodology (or joint needs assessment) is a pivotal instrument underpinning such an exercise, which guides the complex and labour-intensive process carried out in partnership among multilateral, bilateral and regional actors, non-governmental organizations, civil society and representatives of national authorities. Such assessments are conducted in close collaboration with national Governments and stakeholders (including former parties to conflict, civil society, and non-governmental organizations) with a view to eliciting a national vision for the end state after the defined transition period, and shaping the recovery and reconstruction priorities and their financial implications. The United Nations/World Bank transitional results matrix is also being used to capture specific results, benchmarks, and costing implications associated with the post-conflict needs assessment, and serves as a monitoring and

accountability platform to support the dialogue between international and national actors, and between national authorities and the general public.

58. While the national plans and results matrices resulting from the needs assessment and results matrix exercises are technical documents representing the objective needs of the country, they also serve to underpin the political or peace process among national and international actors by providing a strong development platform on which to implement the national vision for peace and stability for the future. The assessments and the related national/donor coordination platforms for ongoing dialogue and monitoring have played an invaluable role in bringing together key partners around agreed priorities and requirements and provided a credible space in which to discuss progress, funding allocation, and performance of key partners against commitments.

59. Work is ongoing to establish clear linkages with other planning and appeal instruments. A variety of approaches has been adopted to help ensure that humanitarian needs continue to be met, despite the different planning time frames and actor profiles of the needs assessment and results matrix and the consolidated appeal process. There is also early experience with establishing forward linkages between needs assessment/results matrix planning and national poverty reduction strategies, as well as with United Nations Development Assistance Framework/common country assessment planning, all aimed to harmonize and make the best use of already available analysis and priority-setting exercises. The United Nations and the World Bank are also looking at the possible adaptation of the needs assessment/results matrix approach for natural disaster scenarios.

60. Experience with different funding mechanisms and, most recently, a variety of multi-donor trust fund models is providing a number of lessons for further review with regard to timing, scope and operational modalities to best support United Nations response in transition scenarios. Ongoing discussions with regard to the possible establishment of a standing peacebuilding fund could also be instructive in this regard. However, the continuing disconnect between relief and reconstruction funding modalities of many donor countries continues to be a challenge to United Nations efforts to ensure predictable and accessible resources for post-conflict response.

61. While United Nations coordination support for humanitarian response and coordination for long-term development are well established and functioning, United Nations coordination mechanisms in the transition space still suffer from significant capacity gaps. As the experience of the Indian Ocean tsunami has just taught us, the post-disaster support to the Resident Coordinator for recovery planning must be scaled up at an early stage. As recent needs assessment exercises have demonstrated in post-conflict settings, humanitarian response is still in full swing when the window of opportunity for peace opens and the United Nations system, through the Resident Coordinator, is called upon to engage in broad-based transition and recovery planning. However, the institutional and financial capacity to meet the support needs of the Humanitarian Coordinator in humanitarian response far outpaces the institutional and financial capacity to support the Resident Coordinator. This imbalance must be addressed if we are to meet effectively the complex of challenges facing us in the transition period.

VI. Implications for future action

62. The transition from relief to development following both violent conflict and disasters associated with natural hazards is complex. In post-conflict societies, poverty pervades, Government and institutional capacity remains fragile, refugees and internally displaced persons need assistance to return home, corruption may persist, unemployment is high, and there is often a continued absence of adequate social services in many areas of the country. Recovery from a major disaster is as much about rebuilding — and where possible improving — lives as it is about restoring infrastructure. Managing recovery in any transition context requires investment of funds and effort in building national capacity, empowering communities and exploiting the synergies among development, humanitarian and other actors.

63. It is critical that, in the future, disaster recovery efforts continue to focus on promoting national and local ownership of and participation in the recovery phase and support national and local capacity across a range of disaster-management activities, including response systems, preparedness measures and risk mitigation and reduction. In support of those efforts, the United Nations should continue to improve recovery service delivery and accountability by strengthening leadership and coordination support structures in the field and by improving institutional accountability at Headquarters. This may include strengthening the resident coordinator system to take on a more directive role during the transition phase and strengthening the United Nations country teams to ensure that the necessary support is provided at the right time, in a predictable manner and in the most cost-effective way through the transition period.

64. Recognizing, on the basis of past experience, that the window of opportunity to raise disaster-related funds has been short-lived and has not led to predictable or adequate funding for the recovery phase, it is critical to ensure that response to needs identified in existing resource mobilization mechanisms, such as flash and consolidated appeals, includes support for early recovery needs and transition coordination, and support Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams to issue transitional appeals for needs not captured in these emergency appeal instruments.

65. Recognizing also that humanitarian needs continue well into the post-conflict recovery and reconstruction period but that existing humanitarian appeals do not cover the full range of early transition activities required to ensure stabilization and re-establishment of basic State infrastructure before full needs assessments can be completed, it is essential to fully fund early recovery needs identified in the consolidated appeal process, and to support Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams in issuing early transitional appeals, where appropriate, for needs not covered by the consolidated appeal process.

Notes

[1] A detailed evaluation of the national recovery process can be found at http://www.saloneinfosys.org/encyclopedia2004/nrsAssRptDec03.pdf.

[2] The areas identified are strengthening political governance and promoting national dialogue; strengthening economic governance and institutional development; promoting economic recovery; and improving access to basis services.